House That Refused To Die

Built In 1833; Escapes Razing

YPSILANTI (AP) — A tired, old house that traveled safely 133 years through time now has moved six miles through space to escape destruction.

In its day, the house saw service as an underground railway station during the Civil War, served as an apartment house and then as a Prohibition days speakeasy.

Built in the early 1800s and cited as one of the finest examples of Greek Revival architecture in the Midwest, the house Tuesday was moved from its original site in Ypsilanti's business area to the farm of its new owners, Mr. and Mrs. Charles V. Hagler.

BOUGHT FOR $1

The Haglers purchased the structure for $1, eliminating the necessity for destruction after it was condemned as a fire, health and safety hazard last spring.

They said they would restore the entire building and refurnish it during the next five years.

Former owner of the house offered it to the city for $1 in hope the Historical Committee could relocate and restore it. But city officials said the cost would be prohibitive and rejected the offer.

County records show the house's first mortgage was for $800 in December, 1833. The owner then, Ezra D. Lay, later a state representative, operated a 25,000-tree fruit orchard for many years.

FALSE FLOOR

A false floor was found in the rear section of the house, giving rise to stories the home was used to hide runaway slaves during the Civil War.

In 1916 the house was the summer home of a Detroit attorney, who initiated extensive repairs on the weather-worn exterior.

A maid in the house at the time of the renovation recalls four fireplaces were covered during the repairs. The Haglers have located one in their preliminary reconstruction work.

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Howard of Detroit, who owned the house about 10 years ago, said the ceiling beams were marred by axe marks, indicating the house probably was built from hand-hewn lumber.

A workman hired by the Howards said he remembered the house as a tavern during prohibition.

It cost over $6,000 to move the 67-foot long house but, "it was too good to let die," Hagler said.

133-YEAR-OLD HOUSE TO BE SAVED: After 133 years of service as headquarters for Michigan's first tree nursery, an underground railway station during the Civil War, an apartment and a tavern during Prohibition, a 67-foot long house in Ypsilanti is moved six miles to the farm of its new owners, Mr. and Mrs. Charles V. Hagler of Detroit. Hagler paid $1 for the house, which he plans to restore. (AP Wirephoto)

Asks Exam On Larceny